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BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: THE CONTINUING CRISIS

by

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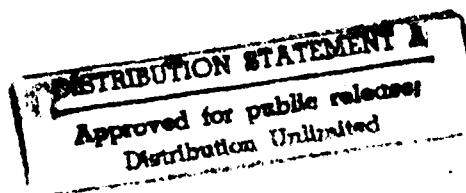
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# **BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: THE CONTINUING CRISIS**

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The conflict in the former Balkan nation of Yugoslavia has generated heated discussion and worldwide controversy as to how the international community should respond in order to end this bitter struggle. The multitude of proposed alternatives ranges from a hands-off approach, to total intervention by a coalition occupation force in an effort to restore and maintain peace. The options and opinions being presented are as many and varied as those presenting them. One theme that appears throughout, is the desire to find a solution that will put an end to the killing and atrocities, particularly of the noncombatant civilian population. This horrible trademark of the Balkan conflict, brought to the living rooms of the world through modern media, has fueled the fires of international passion. The situation in the former Yugoslavia, involves many political, social and diplomatic underpinnings that require detailed discussion in developing an accurate understanding of the conflict's complicated background. This paper, however, will focus primarily on recommendations and options that are within the realm of the operational level commander. A brief history will provide a basic background leading up to the commencement of aggression, followed by a force comparison of the former Yugoslav units involved. International force composition possibilities will be examined followed by the presentation and analysis of various plans as they might be requested by a operational level commander in determining a final course of action. This is not a strategic estimate, nor is it a commander's estimate. It is a presentation of information to assist in the decision making process.

## CHAPTER II

### History of the Controversy

**Background.** As recently as April, 1991, Yugoslavia existed as a federation of six republics: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia; and two autonomous provinces: Voljodina and Kosovo. These republics had been held tightly and forcibly together for 35 years by the Communist government of Josip Broz Tito who rose to leadership out of the ashes of a brutal civil war that raged from 1941 until 1945. Yugoslavia was born from the fragile war termination agreement of World War I. After the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in World War I, war termination agreements united the Serbians, Croats and Slovans within what would eventually become known as Yugoslavia. The small republics within Yugoslavia were diverse in religious and ethnic orientation as well as economic standing. The Croats and Slovans maintained a high standard of living, while the economically poor Serbs held power in most of the important political and military positions. The Slovans and Croats were predominantly of the Roman Catholic faith while the Serbians were primarily Eastern Orthodox. The civil war that raged during World War II was a result of Croats and Slovans seeking self-determination and independent statehood from the Serb-dominated Yugoslav government. Serbia resisted Axis regional domination and was crushed, while Croatia sided with the aggressors and was given its independence under the Facist "Ustashe" regime. The "savage reprisals and counter-reprisals" between the Serbs and Croats during this period deeply entrenched the hatreds between the two countries.<sup>1</sup> It is estimated, that by

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<sup>1</sup>Sabrina P. Ramet, "The Breakup of Yugoslavia," Global Affairs, Spring 1991, p. 95.

the end of World War II, 650,000 to 1.5 million Yugoslavs had been killed.<sup>2</sup> Josep Tito, whose resistance group had proved strongest in the Serbian insurgency against the Facists, was recognized by Allied forces as the man to lead post-war Yugoslavia. After establishing a Communist government, Tito attempted to rectify the problems of the pre-World War II Yugoslavia by asserting strong, authoritarian leadership. But, the tensions persisted, generated by the nationalistic desires of the Croat and Sloven populations under Serbian-dominated rule. By 1971, Yugoslavia again appeared to be on the verge of collapse. Tito and his army tightened the iron fist and began to purge separatist elements (primarily Croatian party members as they presented the largest resistance to the republic).<sup>3</sup> The movement persisted and constitutional revisions were attempted in an effort to provide a greater level of independence to the non-Serbian populations of the region. The country was divided into six states along with the two provinces. The provinces of Kosovo, comprised of 90% Albanians, and Voljodina, primarily Hungarian, were left under Serbian control in order to pacify Serbian desires. The League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY), which was comprised primarily of the army and tasked with enforcing the structural integrity of the country, was established as the ninth entity in the Yugoslav governmental system. Presiding over this semi-autonomous, semi-conglomerate nine-party system was Josep Tito, president for life. Through the strength of his army, his powerful dictatorship held the lid on this boiling pot of deeply rooted ethnic differences and animosities.

Militarily, the principle active army force was maintained at the central level. 15% of the overall army in the Yugoslav republic was in this Yugoslav

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<sup>2</sup>U.S. Institute for Peace, Conflict and Conflict Resolution in Yugoslavia (Washington: 1992), p. 7.

<sup>3</sup>James Gow, "Deconstructing Yugoslavia," Survival, July/August 1991, p. 294.

People's Army (YPA). This is where the vast quantities of weapons and stockpiles of ammunition were controlled. Each republic had its own army as well. These were available to be called up to protect Yugoslavia in time of outside aggression. Though armed units were available, the republican armies were largely held in reserve. The job of the YPA was to organize and train these separate units and as a collateral duty, keep them in check in the event they might be used against the central government by a republic seeking independence. The republican armies, besides providing the reserve forces in time of war, also provided security for the central government as insurance against any YPA coup attempts.

This system seemed to operate as planned, largely due to Tito's ability to make it work. However, after his death in 1980, things began to unravel. Without the strong-fisted dictator to maintain central authority, the still simmering idea of nationalism began to rise to the boiling point once again. The Yugoslav People's Army was made up largely of Serbs, perpetuated through the years from the Serbian dominated regime following the civil war. Leaders in the republics and provinces now preached nationalism vice communism as the commitment of choice. As the overall economy of the struggling Yugoslavia slid into despair, republics looked for alternate ways to rebuild their own systems. Croatia and Slovenia opted for market-based systems, while Serbia and Montenegro desired to retain their state-owned systems. Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia sought out some middle ground.<sup>4</sup>

**Present Day Situation.** As the desires for independence continued to grow within the republics, relations with the Yugoslav government were stretched to the breaking point. Finally in 1990, starting with Slovenia, the republics began to separate. Serbia wanted to rewrite the constitution and hold the republics together in a federation while Croatia and Slovenia sought a loose confederation

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 295.



of states much like that of the European community.<sup>5</sup> Montenegro sided with Serbia, while Bosnia-Herzegovina leaned towards a confederation. As talks were carried out, it became obvious that without the strong central authority that was present during the Tito regime, the chances for coming to any type of agreement by all republican leaders were extremely slim.

In the meantime, as the Yugoslav People's Army saw Yugoslavia's political ends unraveling, they began to secure arms from the republican armies, all of them that is, except for Serbia. Serbia desired to maintain a unified Yugoslavia vested in the ideas of communism. Since this was more closely aligned to the basis and ideals of the YPA, Serbia was permitted to maintain its military strength. The YPA became continually more Serb dominated as officers and men from other republics chose to leave and join the militaries of their respective republics.

Within the various Yugoslav republics, the ethnic populations were as divided as the country itself. Croatia's population, for example, was 12% Serbs, while Bosnia-Herzegovina was comprised of an even larger 33%. As Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic called for Serbian unity in a "greater Serbia," and "alluded to Serbia's desire to annex parts of Croatia and Bosnia," these various Serbian factions began to coalesce and the inter-republic tensions increased.<sup>6</sup> The Serbian population in Croatia established the Serbian National Council in July 1990 and organized a referendum determining that 99% of Croat Serbs favored Serbian autonomy in the event that Croatia declared its independence.<sup>7</sup> Bosnia-Herzegovina, which is a major conglomerate of various cultures and religions, is primarily Muslim, comprising 41% of the population with a substantial 17% Croat faction as well. Its large 33% Serbian element became another voice in the outcry for Serbian unity. Persistent attempts by the Serbians to build a unified nation

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<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p.297

<sup>6</sup>Ramet, p. 100.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 99.

within the republics was seen as even more reason for the various republics to move towards independence. The threat of Serbian domination produced a severe threat to the other groups' aspirations for self-determination and ethnic unity. As the Serbian unification movement continued, Croatian Serbs set up civilian militias and received arms from Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia.<sup>8</sup> The Yugoslav Peoples Army, which now was comprised of 70% Serbians, did nothing to intervene in the formation of these illegal Serbian paramilitary organizations and by their lack of action, effectively condoned their existence.

The other republics in the country were divided culturally as well. Kosovo with its prominent ethnic Albanian population, was subjected to Serbian authority in its provincial status. The people of Kosovo were in pursuit of republic status, but were suppressed by the Serbs who view Kosovo as the Jews view Jerusalem. In Kosovo, there was a growing enthusiasm to separate from Serbia and unite with Albania. Voljodina is made up of a large mix of populations including Croats and sought similar goals with regard to Croatia.

Negotiations between the republics continued. Numerous threats of action were made by the Yugoslav Presidency if the Sloven and Croat republics did not disband and de-arm their independent military organizations. Finally, in February 1991, Slovenia seceded from Yugoslavia formerly declaring their independence along with Croatia on June 25, 1991. The other republics began to take sides with Macedonia falling in with Slovenia and Croatia, to be followed by Bosnia a short time later. Bosnian Serbs population would remain loyal to the Serbian government and the idea of a greater Serbia. Montenegro aligned with Serbia, and Voljodina and Kosovo, though controlled by Serbia, continued to voice strong opposition to that control.

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<sup>8</sup>Vienna Domestic Service (November 1, 1990), trans in FBIS, Daily Report (Eastern Europe), November 5, 1990, p. 5., quoted in Ibid., p. 100.

Western nations watched the Yugoslav situation from a distance, growing progressively more concerned over the developments. Both the United States and the European Community saw the need for a unified, stable Yugoslavia and, in the absence of Tito, supported the Serbs in their desire to maintain that unity. As Milosevic initially appeared to be the man to fill the void left by Tito, Western support for him was strong for several years. However, as the corruptness and designs in his plans became apparent, the United States reevaluated its position and ultimately suspended aid and support for all Yugoslavia. By including all of Yugoslavia in the suspension, the United States was essentially, not taking sides. In June 1991, there was little backing for Croatia or Slovenia by the international community. As a result, the Yugoslav Peoples Army took action with YPA troops previously deployed in Slovenia. The Territorial Defense Forces in Slovenia had lost some 40% of their armament supplies during the first YPA attempts to de-arm the Territorial Defense Forces, but it still maintained a good basis on which to build. The Slovenes, by better preparedness, intelligence, and use of propaganda were able to favorably end the conflict and oust the YPA in less than two weeks.<sup>9</sup>

Defeated only for the moment, Yugoslavia leveled its sights on Croatia in July 1991. This conflict was a product of a strong rise of Croatian nationalism under leader Franco Tudjman, and Serbian President Milosevic's determination to provide for a "Greater Serbia." Croatian Serbs grew fearful of persecution and fought along side the YPA against Tudjman's Croats in an effort to secure territories in Croatia. This conflict, fueled by the memories of the atrocities committed during the Second World War, developed into a far more protracted conflict than the Sloven struggle with both sides committing numerous atrocities against each other. The Serbian forces attacked civilian population centers like

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<sup>9</sup>James Gow, "Slovenia--Territorial Defence a Year on," Jane's Intelligence Review, July 1992, p. 305.

Vukovar, virtually leveling them as they went. Serbian lines of communication and supply were secured through the northern territory of Voljodina, and the Croats were not as well prepared or organized as the Slovans. With the United Nations providing the medium for negotiation and later the peacekeeping forces, on January 1992, a cease-fire was established. It has been a fragile arrangement in which Croatia was forced to give up the territories occupied by the Serbs and both sides were required to put their heavy weapons under U.N. control. The cease-fire has shown signs of weakness with spurious fighting breaking out throughout the region and the authority of the Peacekeeping forces questioned. The Serbs have, on more than one occasion, pressed right past the Peacekeeping forces to recover their U.N. controlled weapons.<sup>10</sup>

On January 15, 1992, the European Community, lead by Germany, recognized the two republics of Slovenia and Croatia. As Bosnia-Herzegovina saw the successful attempts by Slovenia and Croatia to achieve recognition, they too applied in January 1992 (The United States, after some reluctance, would recognize all three states in April 1992). In Bosnia-Herzegovina, referendums were held in late February and March and more than 99% of the voting populace was in favor of independence. This was only 63% of the population though, as the Bosnian Serb community refused to participate.<sup>11</sup> Instead, they set about establishing their own "Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina" under the leadership of Radovan Karadzic. This separate "republic within a republic" included almost half of the Bosnia-Herzegovina Territories for the 33% Serbian populous.<sup>12</sup> On April 4, the organized army of Bosnian Serbs carried the banner of Serbian nationalism into battle against the Bosnian Croats and Muslims.

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<sup>10</sup>Bruce W. Nelan, "The Guns Talk Too," Time, 22 February 1993, p. 47.

<sup>11</sup>Steven J. Woehrel, "Bosnia-Herzegovina: Background to the Conflict," CRS Report for Congress, 21 January 1993, p. 4.

<sup>12</sup>F. Stephen Larrabee, "Instability and Change in the Balkans," Survival, Summer 1992, p. 39.

Supported and supplied by Serbia, the Bosnian Serb's superior firepower provided a large military edge over the poorly organized and outfitted Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Initial attacks were upon Croatian populated regions and the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo: Some of the fiercest fighting continues to take place in and around Sarajevo along with several isolated enclaves of Muslim resistance throughout the region.

Since the conflict within Bosnia-Herzegovina began in April 1992, the Bosnian Serbs have seized large portions of territories receiving resistance primarily from the Bosnian Croat forces and, to a much lesser extent, from the poorly equipped and organized Muslim forces. By late June there was only a small portion around Sarajevo and six small enclaves still in Muslim control. These areas were still major centers of communication and industry, but successful Serbian attempts to cut off utilities and supplies have brought them to a standstill. The primary Serbian objectives presently include the establishment of two corridors from Serbian Yugoslavia into the northern regions of Bosnia-Herzegovina. These corridors are in the vicinity of the Muslim enclave surrounding the city of Tuzla, and would provide vital lines of supply and communication between Serbia and the Bosnian Serbs.

By April 1993, 150,000 Bosnian civilians as well as armed forces perished and 70% of Bosnia's territories were held or controlled by Bosnian Serbs under the auspices of the new "Serbian Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina."

## CHAPTER III

### THE ARMED FORCES OF THE WAR IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

**The Army of Bosnian Serbs.** In examining the various fighting forces involved in the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Army of Bosnian Serbs is the best equipped and supplied of any of the participants. It is heavily backed by the Army of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), formerly the Yugoslav People's Army (YPA). This army, as was stated earlier, maintained elements in all of the Yugoslav Republics and was tasked with providing the front line defense of Yugoslavia prior to the country's breakup. As it lost ground in Slovenia and Croatia, the FRY consolidated forces in Bosnia. "The army, while professing to act to prevent inter-ethnic clashes in Bosnia-Herzegovina, was covertly providing arms to the local Serbian para-military forces."<sup>13</sup> The government in Belgrade vehemently denied and continues to refute this type of action, basically claiming no responsibility or attachments to the Bosnian Serbs. As Bosnia-Herzegovina neared its formal declaration of independence, it requested that all FRY, except those who were residents, withdraw from the region. After almost a year, in April 1992, the Yugoslav government in Belgrade ordered all FRY troops to leave the republic unless they were residents. Some of the army departed as ordered, but the bulk of the personnel and weapons were transferred to the control of the Territorial Defense Forces of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Though Belgrade claimed that over 80% of the FRY Army had been residents of Bosnia, the facts reveal that it was closer to 20%. This mass of 80,000 troops transferred to the Bosnian Serbs were predominantly Serbian from the almost homogeneous "Serbianized" FRY Army.<sup>14</sup> The Serbian forces in Bosnia prepared

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<sup>13</sup>Milan Vego, "Federal Army Deployments in Bosnia and Herzegovina," Jane's Intelligence Review, October 1992, p. 445.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

in other ways for their eventual conquest. By November 1991, they had successfully divided Bosnia-Herzegovina into six autonomous regions operating outside of Bosnian authority and in pursuit of a separate Serbian republic inside of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The Army of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina maintains a vast and impressive array of weaponry including some 900 tanks, 48 combat aircraft and 20 helicopters. They also acquired the bulk of small arms, ammunition and artillery left behind by the FRY army, a large number of which had been seized by the then YPA when signs of the break-up first erupted.<sup>15</sup> Though well equipped, the Bosnian Serb Army lacks in organization, discipline and fortitude. Even considering their highly successful seizure of Bosnian territories, they have performed poorly when confronted with marginally equipped Muslim and Croat Forces.

**The Croat Army in Bosnia-Herzegovina.** Long before the eyes of Serbian aggression turned towards Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Croats in Bosnia were preparing for what they saw as an inevitable conflict. The Serbian Army had intervened twice before, once in the name of Yugoslav unity and more recently in the name of Serbian Unity. With Bosnia's rising surge to achieve independence, and the YPA's consolidation efforts on Bosnian turf, they were undoubtedly next. This preparedness would prove to be a major factor in preventing the virtual overrun of the republic. The Bosnian Croats received regular support from the regular Croatian Army. In fact, many of the Croats in Bosnia served in the regular Croatian Army previous to the outbreak of hostilities in April 1992. This has, in the big scheme of things, aided some in the overall organization of the units. The Bosnian Croat Forces (HVO) are under control of the president of the Croatian autonomous region of Herzog-Bosnia which is

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 447.

located in Grude. They are financed through the Croatian military where the Army's Main Staff in Zagreb, Croatia, control much of the movements in Bosnia-Herzegovina.<sup>16</sup> The armament situation of the Croatian Army in Bosnia falls somewhere between the well equipped Bosnian Serbs and the poorly equipped Army of Bosnia-Herzegovina. They are lacking in heavy artillery, and anti-air and anti-tank weaponry and ammunition, but have a fairly strong inventory of small arms. Principle areas for improvement are organization and logistical aspects and improved coordination with the Army of Bosnia-Herzegovina.<sup>17</sup>

**The Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina.** As was previously stated, the poorly equipped and organized Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina was not prepared for the onset of war with Serbian forces. In June of 1991, when the Yugoslav People's Army had called for Territorial Defense Force of Bosnia to return the weapons to the YPA, most of these weapons were returned except by the Croatian forces in western Herzegovina. Muslim leaders, realizing the potential danger of the situation and in response to an apparent lack of concern by the government in Sarajevo, took action to organize paramilitary forces for defense against the looming threat. When hostilities broke out during the first week of April 1992, these paramilitary forces would comprise the better organized part of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The political leaders in Sarajevo did their best to organize the various paramilitary units with the main Bosnian Army as well as coax former federal troops to their side. By the time the army had been armed, organized and war officially declared, it was June 26th and much of the Republic's territory had been seized by the Bosnia Serbs.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Milan Vego, "The Croatian Forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina," Jane's Intelligence Review, March 1993, p. 100.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 102.

<sup>18</sup>Milan Vego, "The Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina," Jane's Intelligence Review, February 1993, p. 64.



As the organization continued in an embattled Bosnia-Herzegovina, by early 1993, the army numbered close to 80,000. The success of the U.N. sanctions on all Yugoslavia showed as only some 44,000 were fully armed.<sup>19</sup> The government in Sarajevo has requested aid from Islamic countries resulting some supply attempts being made by Iran and Saudi Arabia. The Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina is still lacking in supplies of small arms and ammunition as well as mortars, anti-tank weapons and heavy artillery. They also have a very limited amount of anti-aircraft weaponry. The capacity to rebuild or replenish this arsenal will have to depend on imports, as their internal capacity was removed or seized by the Federal Army and the Bosnian Serbs. Though initially poorly organized and equipped, the Muslim forces have improved continually. Their main deficiency still lies in their lack of equipment and supplies. Many times throughout the course of the war, moderately equipped Muslim units have proven to be a match for the well equipped Serbian unit.

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

## CHAPTER IV

### INTERNATIONAL INTERVENTION

**The Role of the United Nations.** As the conflict in the former Yugoslavia escalated over the past few years, the United Nations has played an active role in the peacekeeping efforts in the region. On February 21, 1992, a force of 14,000 United Nations Protection Forces (UNPROFOR) was established in an attempt to "create the conditions for peace and security required for the overall settlement of the Yugoslav crisis."<sup>20</sup> This was the second largest force of this type ever established and its mission was to consist primarily of peacekeeping in Croatia and Slovenia. UNPROFOR goals included the successful maintenance of the cease-fire and "to facilitate the negotiation of an overall political settlement." Other goals included the "maintenance of public order, monitoring of police forces, and the returning of displaced persons to their homes." UNPROFOR's objectives in the region of Croatia have been only partially successful. Fighting in the region continues, though on a reduced scale. Serbians still occupy large amounts of land illegally and ignore U.N. forces assigned to protect the heavy artillery. Few refugees have been returned to their homes, but the effort continues. As the conflict swung into Bosnia-Herzegovina, the U.N. found itself with still more problems. This conflict bore similar characteristics to that of Croatia, but this time, it was the Serbian-supported Bosnian Serbs attempting to overwhelm the Croats and Muslims of Bosnia. In the words of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadaka Ogata, the refugees fleeing the recently Serbian occupied territories had "been subjected to horrifying atrocities, through systematic expulsions, forcible relocations, assassinations, [rape] and other forms of

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<sup>20</sup>"Security Council establishes Force to Handle Yugoslav Crisis" UN Chronicle, June 1992, p. 15.

persecution aimed at persons for no other reason but their national, ethnic, or religious origin." "The policy of ethnic cleansing lay at the heart of the conflict."<sup>21</sup> With the winter of 1992 coming on, the UNPROFOR faced another problem. Sarajevo and many other Bosnian cities were under siege and cut off from supplies and utilities. Hundreds of thousands of refugees wandered the hills in search of food and shelter. It was estimated that some 400,000 people could die from exposure and starvation if emergency assistance was not given to the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>22</sup> The U.N. responded to this challenge by sending additional forces to form humanitarian convoys in an attempt to reach the civilians in the besieged cities with food and medical supplies. The Bosnian Serbs responded with a series of broken agreements where "guaranteed" humanitarian convoy passage was refused when the convoys showed up outside of the blockaded cities. In this nation at war, peacekeepers had little influence.

Prior to this, the United Nations had attempted to establish cease-fires, coordinate humanitarian airlifts into Sarajevo and stop atrocities by creating a war crimes commission and bringing international condemnation to bear. All of this had little or no effect. The United Nations had no muscle to support its intentions. At one point, a U.N. convoy carrying the Bosnian Deputy Prime Minister Hakiya Turajlic proved powerless in preventing his assassination. Serbian troops simply walked up to the convoy, sought out their victim and shot him on the spot, as the U.N. peacekeepers looked on.

United Nations' attempts at successfully conducting peace talks has met with failure as well. In their largest effort to date, the United Nations has sponsored a plan devised by U.N. representatives Cyrus Vance and Lord David Owen to divide Bosnia into 10 autonomous provinces. The plan, which attempts to

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<sup>21</sup>Sadaka Ogata, quoted in "Security Council Acts Six More Times on Yugoslav Crisis" UN Chronicle, December 1992, p. 18.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

account for ethnic and religious differences, has been flatly rejected by Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic on the premises that Serbs will have to return land gained during the conflict and give up their heavy weapons to U.N. control.

The U.N. sanctions placed on all of Yugoslavia early in the conflict, have shown little effect against the Bosnian Serbs. They were able to remain militarily healthy through weapons caches received from the Federal Army during the pre-war weapons consolidation effort, and Serbia has continued the resupply effort ever since. The Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina have been directly affected by the sanctions as they have no reliable outside source from which to acquire arms.

These examples vividly illustrate the lack of effectiveness that the United Nations has had in achieving its objectives when only one side is actively seeking peace. It also clearly demonstrates the difficulty in backing intentions when there is no credible threat behind them. In the words of one U.N. representative," You cannot have peacekeeping without peacemaking."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Nelan.

## CHAPTER V

### DEVELOPING COURSES OF ACTION

As the failure of the United Nations to develop and implement a successful peace plan becomes more evident, and the atrocities of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia continue, the international cry for action becomes louder. Determining if there is actually a solution to this problem comes to question; here, in a region where people have been at each others' throats for hundreds of years. From the operational standpoint, it becomes not a question of *if* we will get involved, but how we will achieve success in the event that we *do* get involved.

**Defining Objectives.** The primary concerns before entering into such an endeavor, are determining a clear set of objectives and the desired endstate. Both the objectives and desired endstate can normally be derived from the strategic goals as set forth by the Administration and translated through the National Security Council. Since a clear idea of these has yet to be determined, a general range of possibilities addressing the current regional and international situation must be constructed. In Bosnia-Herzegovina and former Yugoslavia in general, the desired endstate and objectives can be addressed in various terms, each requiring incrementally more outside intervention to achieve, and outside maintenance to sustain. Long and short-term endstates and objectives must be considered. Long-term endstates should include restoring the territorial integrity of Bosnia-Herzegovina, ending Serbian aggression and establishing a democratic government with freely elected officials. In general, our desired short-term endstate should include a rapid halt to the killing of innocent civilians, the practices of ethnic cleansing, and the destruction of domiciles and infrastructure that continues throughout the region. This short term end-state is the primary concern of this paper. The first and probably the broadest desired

objective in reaching that short-term endstate is to stop the fighting. Halting the aggression would increase the possibility of reaching a diplomatic solution at the peace-table while at the same time, protect innocent civilians, end the atrocities of ethnic cleansing and preserve the habitat and infrastructure.

A second possible objective would be to prevent the conflict from spreading to other regions. Identifying potential victims of Serbian aggression and preparing for their defense could prove to be a critical factor in preventing another episode of "ethnic cleansing." The province of Kosovo with its historical ties to Serbia, and neighboring Macedonia, with its geographic significance, are both potential areas for Serbian expansion.

These two short-term objectives, though not all encompassing, could be termed requirements, necessary for establishing a stable point from where a diplomatic solution can be pursued and developed. In absence of other guidance, these objectives will provide the focus for the options outlined in this paper.

**Force Options.** In considering the forces that may be required in order to successfully accomplish the previously mentioned objectives, there are basically three options: The United Nations Forces; the United States Armed Forces; and The Forces of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The first option is continuing to employ the United Nations. The United Nations provides an outstanding forum to unify the support and focus the views of the world's nations. Through the United Nations, resolutions can be developed coordinating international capabilities in the best interest of the situation. The United Nations, however, is best set up for a peacekeeping role and does not, in itself, have the command and control, or the logistical capability to project military might. Its charter provides a medium for coalition-building as in the case of Desert Storm, but the actual organization must be built outside of the United Nations. The legitimacy of U.N. resolutions provides the justification for the implementation of

international actions. The UN was inserted into the former Yugoslavia as a peacekeeping force. But, as has been painfully demonstrated, the keeping of peace requires both sides to desire peace, and desire the presence of the peacekeeping forces. Serbian factions have demonstrated time and time again, that this is far from the case. They use the negotiations to stall for time while continuing to absorb Bosnian territories. Therefore, the situation as it now exists, is probably beyond the capabilities of U.N. peacekeeping forces.

The second force option, is the use of United States Armed Forces from a unilateral standpoint. For the United States, this provides several advantages, especially from the decision making aspect. Large groups of nations can be slow to come to agreement on simple issues, let alone ones as complex as Bosnia-Herzegovina. It took the United Nations well over four months to act on a No-Fly Policy prohibiting Serbian airborne military operations over Bosnia-Herzegovina. Serbian air operations continued the entire four months, with the No-Fly resolution firmly in place, while the Western nations determined how they should enforce it.

Another reason favoring unilateral action is that since the United States would undoubtedly provide the bulk of the force required in any military operation, that operation could be much easier to control unilaterally. The major consideration in all of this is that U.S. actions affect a lot more people than just the former Yugoslavians. The United Nations has well over 18,000 troops on the ground in the region (none of which are American) and any actions taken against the Serbian aggressors could result in retaliation against those peacekeeping troops. Also, any action that is not agreed upon by the neighboring European countries could result in loss of the use of airfields and port facilities, over-fly rights, etc., essential to the successful accomplishment of any operation.

The third option for consideration is employing the Forces of the North

Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). This option sets into motion an organization that is internally structured for the use of military force. It was initially conceived as a defense force to protect against invasion from Soviet Bloc nations. NATO was not set up for operations outside of their theater but, since the Yugoslavian conflict is situated basically on NATO's doorstep, involves access to and from several member nations and is in direct interest to the security of the European balance, this crisis may fit well into NATO's agenda. In applying this situation to NATO's origins, it may be construed that the Yugoslav conflict, if allowed to continue unchecked, could send a bad signal to the other former Eastern Bloc nations that are in the throws of similar political, economic and social transitions. These nations may perceive European tolerance in the Balkans as the "green light" to operate in a similar manner, posing long term security problems if the communist threat reemerges in Eastern Europe. A strong, unified action by NATO forces in support of European interests and in condemnation of this type of aggression may pay great dividends in the long run. By sending NATO Forces in support of United Nations resolutions, it would not only serve NATO interests, but would send a clear signal from the the entire world as well. This type of action may be the new calling for the NATO charter.

In considering possible actions to achieve our basic short term objectives, the options range from diplomatic, political and economic coercion, to varying degrees of military force. An operational level commander is required to be fluent in not only military force application, but *all* types of force including diplomatic, economic, and political options. "The military leader's responsibility to influence the larger community requires him to inspire action in circumstances in which he lacks the authority."<sup>24</sup> These options must be

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<sup>24</sup>Headquarters Departments of the Army and the Air Force, Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict, Field Manual 100-20, Air Force Pamphlet 3-20 (Washington: 5 December 1990), p. 1-9.



addressed and considered in any recommendation the commander may make to his superiors. In the following text, non-military options will be addressed initially, followed by a list of increasingly escalating military options.

**Non-Military Peacemaking Options.** The interaction between the Serbian government in Belgrade and the Bosnian Serb government is a critical factor in the Bosnian Serbs capability to continue its campaign. Their reliance on supplies from Serbia has been accentuated by their effort to open corridors between the two countries. Although Belgrade consistently denies its involvement, actions have proven otherwise. One non-military option would be to break up this covert alliance by economically isolating Serbia and the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and bringing diplomatic pressure to bear on Serbia by their allies. One ally that has great interest in this region and could potentially provide a great deal of leverage is Russia. If the Russians became involved, the Serbian "little brother" might well listen to them. The main problem with this is that the Russians have historical and ethical roots in this region and have been adverse to challenging the Serbs. Their President, Boris Yeltsin has a plethora of internal concerns and was, until a recent favorable referendum, on very shaky ground. Now, with Yeltsin getting a strong vote of confidence from his people, this may be a course of action that the Western nations can pursue more freely. With President Yeltsin's desire for Russia to retake a leadership position in the world, and the recent international offers of aid and assistance to help Russia get on their political and economic feet, he may be more apt to provide assistance in defusing the situation. If we can impress upon the Russian government and its people, that these atrocities are unacceptable by global standards, their influence may bear great weight on the actions of the Serbian nation. This may at least help to accomplish the short-term objectives and enhance the possibility of a peaceful, negotiated solution to the situation.

Diplomacy could play a much stronger role in internationally isolating the Serbian nation as well. Effective coalition building, like that in the Gulf War, may prove to be a much stronger and persuasive influence on the smaller, weaker nation of Serbia. Facing a strong coalition could influence the breakup of the Serbian support system for the Bosnian Serbs. If enough international pressure is brought to bear on, Serbia may see further intervention as a poor choice and discontinue its practice..

Along with outside diplomatic pressure being increased, economic sanctions on the Yugoslav nation should be strengthened. The U.N. blockade "leaks like a sieve,[in fact] its a joke," explained one NATO Officer.<sup>25</sup> The immense cold war armament surplus that abounds on the world market, needs to be kept out of belligerents' arsenals. This will require stronger measures of maritime and airborne enforcement in order to be effective. It would also require the surrounding nations of Greece, Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, and Austria to cooperate in the effort. The use of non-military means to bring an end to the fighting must be continued, bringing all means to bear, even if and when military force is implemented.

In view of both sides' poor track record for preserving cease-fires (particularly the Serbs), another possible action to stop the fighting might be to increase the defensive capability of the present and potential victims of the Serbian aggression. This would entail the lifting of the U.N. embargo for the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina and any other potential victims of Serbian aggression. Consideration could even be made for supplying and training the Bosnian Army in an effort to make their strength a deterrent to Serbian aggression. This action could easily be construed "throwing gasoline on the fire," leading only to an escalation of the death and destruction. But, as was pointed out

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<sup>25</sup>David H. Hackworth, "The Blockade is a Joke," Newsweek, 12 October 1992, p. 46.

before, the Armies of Slovenia and Croatia fought well against the Federal and Serbian forces largely because they had the means to do so. As a result, the attacking Serbian forces were more reluctant and/or less capable of devouring large amounts of territory as they have so successfully in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In Croatia and Slovenia there have been agreements reached (fragile as they may be) where the fighting has been halted or at least reduced allowing the diplomats the opportunity to work out a solution. The Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina, when relatively well outfitted, has demonstrated the potential to fight well against the Serbian forces. It must be recognized too, that these people are naturally inspired by the fervor that is generated from fighting on one's own soil, for one's own homes and families, an advantage the invading force never has. Therefore, although this objective may appear to be escalatory in nature, it could have a strong affect on countering the will of the Bosnian Serbs and cause them to question the value of continuing along their present course of action.

Besides increasing the defensive capacity of the Bosnians, the defense of other potential victims must be considered. As the plan has unfolded this far, the Serbs in their cry for a "greater Serbia," continue to move their military sights from Yugoslavian republic to another. By providing the means to build a suitably armed force in countries such as Macedonia and Kosovo, who face this potential aggression, Serbia may think twice about continuing their expansionistic trend.

**Military Options.** The use of military force brings whole new dimensions to the considerations and concerns of taking action in Bosnia-Herzegovina. First of all, there are over 18,000 United Nations Peacekeeping Forces on the ground in the former Yugoslavia. The reaction of Serbian forces to military force is difficult to discern. Once the line is crossed and military means are employed, this peacekeeping force is put in a difficult and potentially dangerous position, subject to becoming targets for the belligerents. The peacekeeper's dilemma must

be carefully considered when the decision to use force is reached.

The levels of possible military intervention vary greatly in magnitude and subsequent commitment required to follow-up and maintain the action. The No-Fly resolution, passed by the UN in October 1992 and finally enforced by NATO forces in March 1993, has proven to be relatively effective deterrent in preventing Serbs from flying combat missions over Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Serbians have failed to challenge the no-fly zone, since NATO aircraft have begun to enforce it. This may indicate a lack of will in the Serbian forces to confront outside forces. It may also have forced them to use their ground forces to a greater extent.

The problem of artillery bombardment of Sarajevo from the surrounding mountains still persists. The smaller Muslim enclaves surrounding Bosnian cities like Srebrenica, Cerska and Zepa have fallen victim to these assaults as well. Supplies continue to flow from Serbia along several key routes into the Bosnian Serb controlled regions. One of the recommended methods for destroying or hampering the use of these key Serbian assets is the use of surgical air strikes against the artillery positions and the lines of communication and supply. This would not require the use of ground forces and could provide enough incentive for the Serbs to discontinue their random shelling of Muslim population centers. As the No-Fly policy went into effect with little opposition, this type of action may prove to be effective as well. There are, however, several realities about the level of effectiveness of such strikes that must be brought out prior to implementation. When targeted equipment can be acquired visually with relative ease (as in the desert with few trees and flat terrain), this type of bombing can be very effective. The tree covered, mountainous terrain in the former Yugoslavia could prove to be quite a challenge to this mission. Artillery can be camouflaged, shielded by mountainous terrain, and moved when discovered. The Serbian surplus of hand

launched surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) and anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) could drive NATO pilots to high altitude munitions delivery, resulting in greatly reduced accuracy. The Bosnian Serbs have also been known to place artillery batteries in close proximity of civilian structures thereby increasing the possibility of collateral damage. In cutting supply lines between Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, air strikes may prove to be successful in the open areas during the daylight hours. The truck convoys, however, could still move at night and, as was evidenced in Desert Storm, our success at locating and destroying Scud sights was questionable. Again, collateral damage to the civilian areas must be considered.

If air strikes prove unsuccessful in causing the Bosnian Serbs to stop fighting, and Serbia continues to provide support for the Bosnian Serbs, then the strikes can be carried to Serbia proper. By concentrating on military targets such as ammunition depots, weapons production facilities and fuel storage areas, our focus can remain on our objectives. With the more hardened sites, cruise missiles could be employed. When the Serbs have the destruction brought to their own country, they may see the issues from a different perspective and be persuaded to discontinue support for the aggression in neighboring Bosnia. In this area, psychological operations (PSYOP) could augment this effort, targeting the Serbian civilian population and providing information concerning the extent of atrocities in Bosnia. Internationally, direct action against Serbia is subject to more criticism. Russia and the Former Soviet Union may find great fault with this approach. The coalition may suffer as well in that several of the neighboring states acting in the name of peaceful negotiations, also have ties to Serbia and may be forced to choose sides.

Now, what if air strikes fail to influence the Serbs and only serve to harden the will of the Serbian Army and civilian population? We must have prepared, in advance, follow-on plans. Strengthened Serbian willpower, accompanied by lack

of commitment on the coalition side, can only serve to reinforce their belief in the cause and strengthen their desire to continue. This is where the issue of stepping into the proverbial "quagmire" comes into play. If the air strikes prove to be ineffective and fail to produce any positive results towards driving the Serbians to the peace table, then our next step could easily necessitate the employment of hundreds of thousands of NATO troops into Bosnia and the former Yugoslavia.<sup>26</sup> This would require occupation of territories, de-armament of the belligerents and undoubtedly result in a substantial number of casualties. If the Vance-Owen plan is implemented, the numbers of troops required to enforce the boundaries of the ten provinces would be staggering. This occupation could then be necessary for an indefinite period of time as boundaries are redrawn, enforced, and refugees returned to their respective homes. The actual causes of the conflict, the ethnic and religious differences, coupled with the intense hatreds born of the past and reinforced with the recent episodes of "ethnic cleansing" would still exist. To what degree these factors must be resolved prior to the removal of the NATO "peacemaking" forces is difficult to discern.

One other alternative that may be considered is to accept the fact that it may be too late to help out in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Bosnian Serbs have all but accomplished their goals, and trying to put the Yugoslav "puzzle" back together the way it was may be an impossibility. The time of successful intervention may be well past and anything extra, introduced at this time, may only complicate the peacemaking efforts now in effect. In view of this, it is not too late to act on behalf of other perspective victims. By arming, training and preparing them for an eventual Serbian onslaught, we may in fact, discourage such action and succeed in our objective of stopping the spread to other regions. It would also say to other nations that even though we were slow to react in the past, we will be better

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<sup>26</sup>Bruce Clark quoted in "Conflict and Conflict Resolution in Yugoslavia," p. 33.

prepared to prevent this in the future. The longer we wait, the further down the candle burns. We can try to act and salvage what little is left, or we can let the candle burn out and prevent it from spreading elsewhere.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSIONS

The war in Bosnia-Herzegovina is a complicated situation stemming from age-old hatreds between peoples of widely varying ethnical and religious backgrounds. The atrocities that are being committed are beyond the comprehension of most of the free world. Our European ties to the region prompt us to do something to end the hostilities. Failing all other means of persuasion, the United States has always had a credible military force to fall back on. Bosnia poses a different problem. It is not always easy to determine who the enemy is, let alone how military force should be applied. This paper has investigated the background leading to the present day conflict and the forces at war in the region. Options have been presented for prospective forces to employ. Possible short and long-term objectives have been established and, finally, both non-military and military options have been presented. *Determining solutions is difficult, if there are solutions at all.* The one seemingly apparent feature that stands out from this discussion, is the idea that if we do chose military intervention, we had better be prepared, mentally, physically and emotionally to go the distance. Our defeat because of weak efforts disguising weak intentions will only result in harming our credibility, threatening the U.N. peacekeeping efforts and lead to the further demise of the overall situation.



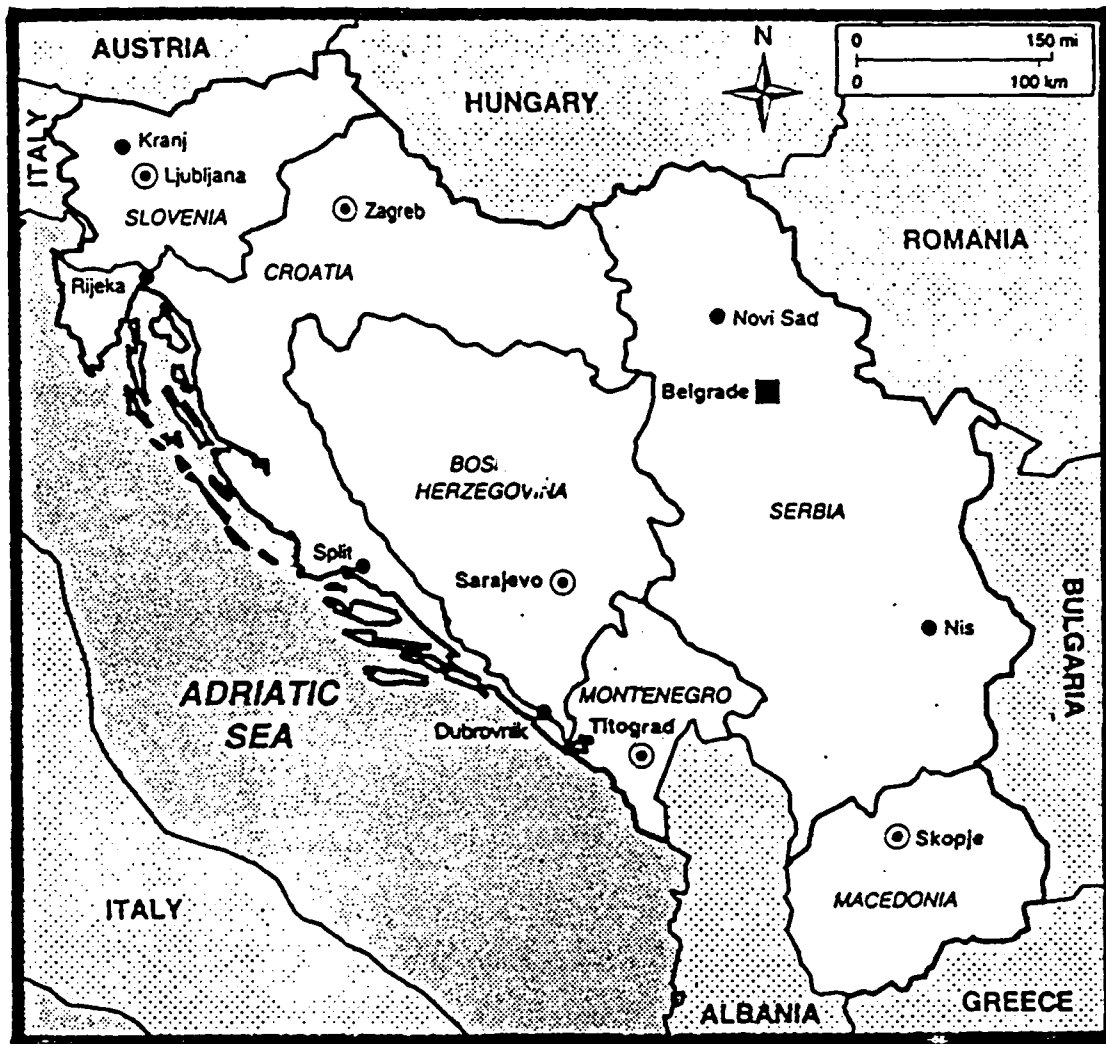
CHAPTER VII  
RECOMMENDATIONS  
CONSIDERATIONS IN THE USE OF FORCE

Prior to the employment of even limited amounts of force, NATO ground forces need to be standing by, ready for action, in case UN peacekeeping forces become the targets of aggression. These forces would have to be ready to deploy on short notice, and in sufficient numbers to replace the peacekeeping forces now in country. The forces must be properly configured, in equipment and numbers, to provide a substantial margin for their own safety as well. This could require forces numbering in the hundreds of thousands, and is a primary requirement before any force is used while U. N. Forces are on the ground in the former Yugoslavia. If we are not prepared for this type of commitment, then we should be extremely hesitant towards any use of military force, no matter how small.

As the commitment to use military force is *made, though it may be* incrementally implemented, it must not be incrementally planned. Early recognition of the limits of our commitment is essential before any action is taken. Our limits must be compared with a thorough analysis of the extent of the enemy's limits. "How far will we go?" vs "How far will he go?" Action can not be introduced without thorough follow-on planning, in case the first action does not succeed. If our course of action is limited and his is determined to be unlimited, then we should deeply consider any military intervention, especially when our actions may threaten the safety of a neutral third party. We may have to be prepared to go "all the way," making our interim steps as coercive as possible in hopes that the enemy will see our strength in commitment and come to the bargaining table before we reach that point. Any sign of waffling or weakness may be seen as lack of commitment and thereby lead to unnecessary conflict protraction as the enemy "guts it out" and waits for us to give up and go away.

**APPENDIX I**  
**MAP OF THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA**

Source: Maps on File, Taken from "Conflict and Conflict Resolution in Yugoslavia," p. iii.

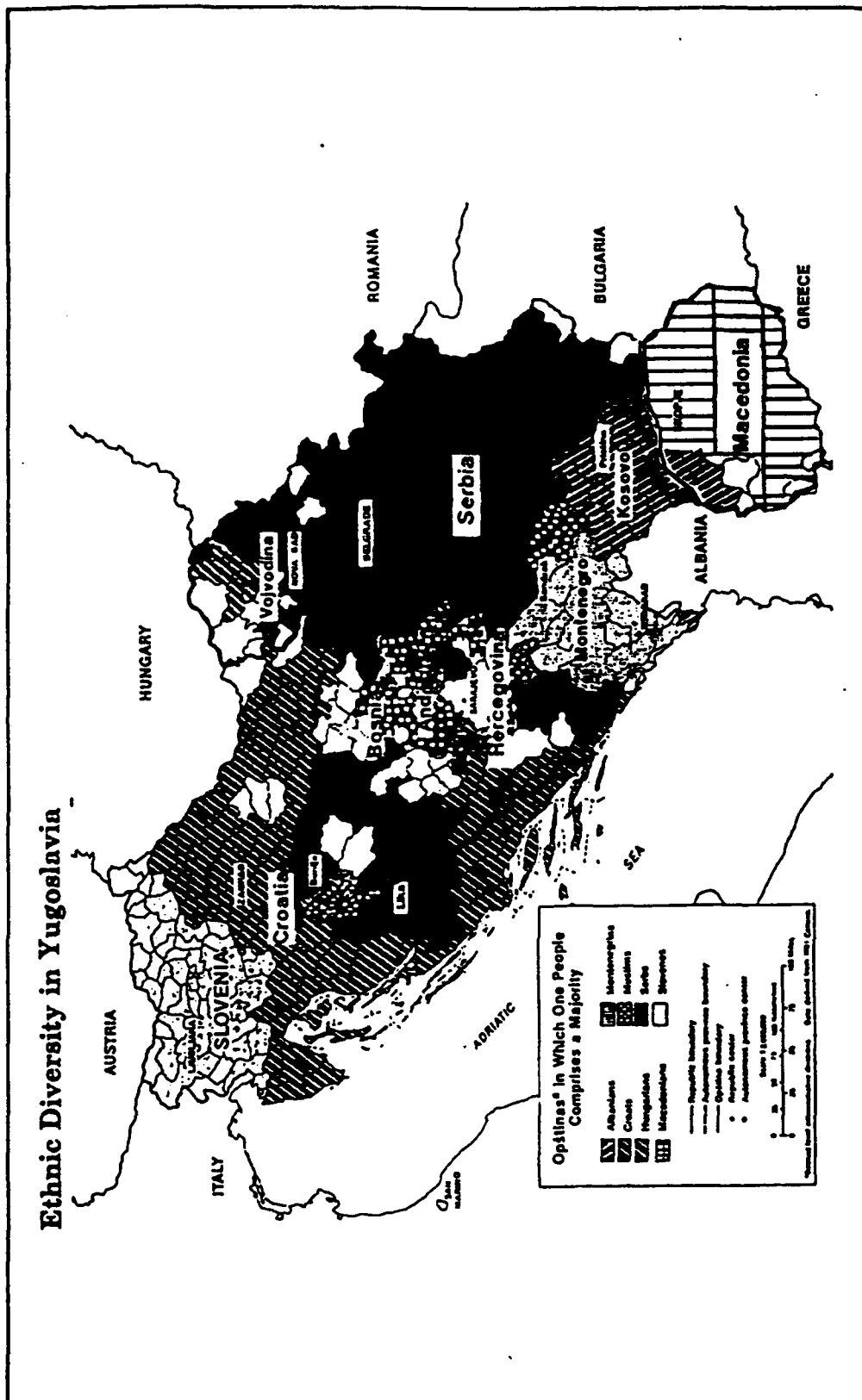


YUGOSLAVIA, 1990

Source: Maps on File  
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**APPENDIX II**  
**ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN YUGOSLAVIA**

Source: Woehrel, p. CRS-15.



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